



Shellfish RESTORATION CLAMOR

MARCH 2006

SHELLFISH RESTORATION NETWORK

Native shellfish play vital ecological roles in many estuaries, but are imperiled in many estuaries by habitat loss, over fishing, and pollution. Through a Shellfish Restoration Network, The Nature Conservancy and its partners are working to improve the design and implementation of restoration projects that help to illustrate the ecosystem services that shellfish provide. Through this network, we also hope to demonstrate the elements necessary to expand restoration and conservation to ecosystem scales.

GLOBAL MARINE INITIATIVE'S VISION

"The Nature Conservancy and partners working together in polar, temperate and tropical seas worldwide to conserve marine biodiversity effectively across seascapes and landscapes through transformative strategies and integrated planning and action."

TO JOIN THE NETWORK, CONTACT:

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For more information about The Nature Conservancy's Global Marine Initiative, visit: www.nature.org/marine

Mad Island Oyster Reef Delivers Impressive Early Results



(L to R) Reef blocks being installed at Mad Island, Texas, in May 2005 ©Jared Laing/TNC; Oysters on a reef block during a survey in January 2006 ©Mark Dumesnil/TNC; Reef blocks protecting the shoreline along the waterway ©Mark Dumesnil/TNC

The Nature Conservancy of Texas is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Department of Transportation, and NOAA to reduce shoreline erosion at the Mad Island Marsh Preserve, located along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. The team used a novel engineering approach to reduce wave energy generated by tug and barge traffic while also providing habitat for oysters.

Mark Dumesnil, Upper Gulf Coast Program Manager for the Conservancy's Texas Chapter, said "We wanted to find solution that delivered multiple ecosystem benefits, and the reef blocks seem to provide exactly the right combination of shoreline protection and important reef habitat".

Oyster reefs deliver various ecosystem services – they provide habitat for a diverse array of other species, clean the water as they filter microscopic algae for food, and in some locations protect shorelines from erosion.

Jared Laing [jlaing@tnc.org] is a Conservancy ecologist who is monitoring of the reef blocks. Early 2006 monitoring results have revealed that a robust population of oysters is developing on the reefs – on average, more than 1,000 oysters per square meter have colonized the blocks since they were installed in 2005. The reef blocks will be monitored over time to document the establishment of the population and to estimate other services such as water filtration rates from the oysters' feeding.

looking ahead

Upcoming Events December 9-13, 2006

Restore America's Estuaries Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana. Deadlines for abstracts: March 31 (talks) and April 20 (posters)
<http://www.estuaries.org/?id=4>

November 15-18, 2006

International Conference on Shellfish Restoration, Charleston, South Carolina.
http://www.scseagrant.org/events/events_conmeet.htm#7

Check out nature.org for a fact sheet about oyster restoration in the Indian River Lagoon:
<http://www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/florida/preserves/art16218.html>

New publication available:

"A Practitioners Guide to Design and Monitoring of Shellfish Restoration Projects: An Ecosystem Services Approach".
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